

# History and Memory in the Farroupilha Revolution: a brief genealogy of the myth

Jocelito Zalla\*  
Carla Menegat\*\*

## RESUMO

O objetivo deste texto é apresentar um panorama das manifestações em torno da Revolução Farroupilha, desde o próprio episódio até sua consolidação como mito fundador da identidade regional no Rio Grande do Sul. Debatendo momentos importantes desse processo, como o da refração à memória sobre o evento, o de sua apropriação política pelo projeto republicano, sua reabilitação pela memória histórica e sua ritualização pelo tradicionalismo gaúcho, propõe-se reconstituir analiticamente a fixação do fato como patrimônio simbólico coeso e múltiplo, suficientemente elástico para pautar conflitos internos e tensões entre o estado e o centro do Brasil.

Palavras-chave: identidade regional; Revolução Farroupilha; memória.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to present a panorama of manifestations related to the Farroupilha Revolution, from the event itself to its consolidation as the founding myth of regional identity in Rio Grande do Sul. Debating important moments in this process, such as the refraction of memory in relation to the event, its political appropriation by the republican project, its rehabilitation in historical memory and its ritualization in *Gaúcho* traditionalism, it proposes to analytically reconstitute the establishment of the fact as a symbolically cohesive and multiple heritage, sufficiently elastic to guide internal conflicts and tensions between the state and the center of Brazil.

Keywords: regional identity; Farroupilha Revolution; memory.

The Farroupilha Revolution (1835-1845) was historically configured as an emblematic event in the public memory of Rio Grande do Sul. The details of its battles are still today narrated in an epic tone and its protagonists transformed into heroes of the 'small' and the 'great' patria, whether for their supposed resistance to the oppression of the political and economic center of Brazil, of

---

\* Masters in History, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul; Teacher in the Colégio de Aplicação of this university. Av. Bento Gonçalves, 9500 – Agronomia. 91501-970 Porto Alegre – RS – Brasil. zallaj@hotmail.com

\*\* Doctoral Candidate, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul. carlamenegat@hotmail.com

for the also hypothetical aspiration for the liberalization and ‘republicanization’ of the country, which results in the affirmation of its nationalist nature. In both senses, as a myth, the revolt has been the matrix for political discourses, historiographic debates, artistic creations and identity projects.

Evidently, its reproduction found an echo in the local and the Brazilian imagination. Anyone who is born and/or lives in the southern state is frequently questioned by discourses that affirm their *Gauchidade* and establish a line of continuity of ‘local values’ with the ‘noble ideals’ of the Farroupilha elite. For example, very recently, an opinion poll<sup>1</sup> confirmed that the self-perception of *Rio-Grandenses* is marked by commonplaces with a long trajectory. When the subject was to identify the ‘face of Rio Grande do Sul,’ 34% of interviewees pointed to the Frontier Region, while 27% chose the Metade Sul (Southern Half). Both, *grosso modo*, share the geographic and symbolic space called the *pampa*. It is the romantic green desert of the wandering horsemen and farm hands on the immense *estâncias* (ranches), which has produced symbols, traditions and heroes such as the Farroupilha leader Bento Gonçalves, chosen as the principal historic figure of Rio Grande by 37% of interviewees. Anyone from the outside who consumes some type of image about the region needs to deal with representations as stereotyped as products of a history of bellic conflicts and principally symbolic between center and periphery. In other words, to the contrary of what the naturalization of the above mentioned ‘cultural profile’ indicates, the attributes now credited to the ethnic Gaucho are fruits of a memorialistic selection, foreign to geographic fatalisms. What is presented as ‘typical’ of the south could very well not be so.

In the specific case of the Farroupilha Revolution, the process of the construction of the fact as symbolic heritage runs through different moments of local intellectual production. Furthermore, the dispute between the different versions of the event and its consolidation as the foundational moment of Gaucho identity has been the subject of the study of scientific historiography. The objective of this article is thus to analyze the process of the production and reproduction of the *Farrapo* episode as a myth, in a prospective and retrospective form, through five key moments: a) the discursive battles within the movement itself; b) the configuration of a marginal and negative memory of the revolt after the resolution of the conflict; c) the celebration of the episode by the republican generation at the end of the nineteenth century; d) the definitive rehabilitation of the Revolution in the official historical memory in the initial decades of the twentieth century; e) the festive return of the myth, with the emergence of the *traditionalist Gaucho movement* at the end of the 1940s.

## THE DIMENSIONS OF THE DISPUTE IN FARROUPILHA DISCOURSES

The *a posteriori* dispute about the facts of the Farroupilha decade which have lent themselves to an epic characterization have hidden a discursive dispute which occurred parallel to the armed conflict. In addition to the analysis carried out to exhaustion in the historiography<sup>2</sup> and by scholars not linked to the academic environment, who created and crystallized controversies, the discourses that existed during the revolt were also inserted in battles, fought in different dimensions of the conflict. It was these dimensions which persisted afterwards and fed many of the narratives constructed at later moments.

Obviously the most evident level of this discursive dispute was in the relationship between the province and the Empire, and certainly this is the aspect of the conflict most looked at, constituting the actual genesis of a 'crisis discourse.'<sup>3</sup> Expressions such as 'Rio Grande do Sul was transformed into an inn of the Empire' remain as strong as when they were used by Bento Gonçalves in his 1835 manifesto. The idea that it was the Empire which failed with the province, as in a relationship in which the center administers the anxieties of all the other entities, has had numerous uses, guaranteeing that the other notion involved in this same set is perpetuated, that of the role of *Sul-Rio-Grandenses* is that of being protagonists in the context of the nation. By failing, the nation obliged the other part to take action.

In dealing with the 'impetuous shock between badly combined interests' – an expression of the *Farroupilhas* for the convulsion the country experienced during the regency – which resulted in the crisis that developed into an armed conflict, the Farroupilha discourse was also aimed at another level of the dispute, which occurred within the province and was opposed to the *legalistas*. The complaints about the injustices committed by the imperial government, such as its inability to negotiate and the harm caused to the citizens of the province, were aimed at the other *Sul-Rio-Grandenses*, as appeals to adhere to the cause. A reflection of the neglect of this dimension of the Farrapo discourse is the apparent homogeneity of the province during the revolt and, more than this, the fact that this character has been constituted in its regional identity. The use of the Farroupilha image as a symbol of belonging to Rio Grande do Sul presupposes the exclusion of this dimension from the discourse.

Another homogeneity constructed through the suppression of a discursive dimension is that of the *Farroupilhas* themselves. The public discourse, especially linked to the Rio-Grandense Republic, disputed the directions of the revolt with other forms of political debate. The cases of the writings of the

Mazzinist Luigi Rossetti is emblematic. Defending the end of slavery and the republic as the only legitimate form of government, he generated so much friction between the leaders of the revolt that he had to resign from being editor of the newspaper. However, his departure did not end the use of the instrument in internal disputes. As can be perceived in the formation of the unfinished Constituent Assembly, the Farrapos also had to be concerned with their heterogeneity and with the distinct projects that competed for the direction that the state in formation would follow.

In recognizing these three dimensions in the discursive context of the Farroupilhas, it is possible to re-evaluate how the uses of memory of the Farroupilha Revolution were constituted in distinct political heritages, with the characteristic doses of suppression and enhancement of each point. Especially if we think that this dispute, to the contrary of the armed battles, did not come to an end with the Ponche Verde Treaty, but like those involved in it, it continued within the heart of the monarchist political system.

#### SILENCE, THE WEIGHT OF SUSPICION AND REDEMPTION

The reintegration of the rebels to the political life of the Empire was as difficult as it was necessary. The battles showed the Empire that there were no greater experts in that terrain than the military commanders trained in the region, and a considerable part of them were on the rebel side, as well as a considerable part of the provincial elite, a particular characteristic in relation to other movements of the period. The proximity of the frontier was also determinant, impelling the imperial government to seek an integration that would not just exterminate the rebel feelings, but also rebuild the economy of the province, devastated during the war.

The years that followed the revolt were marked by two movements in the political discourse: silence and suspicion. The first produced an underground memory, accompanied by expressions of regret and justifications. The second, a state of alert accompanied by constant reprimands which began to constitute itself as a pejorative regional identity, to which was added the suspicion raised by the disclosure of geographic and social differences in the province in relation to the rest of the Empire.

In the initial years the total and full silence was accompanied by recriminations. Like Caldre Fião in *O Corsário*, those who adventured to narrate the episode of Farroupilha did so to show the serious error which the conflict represented in relation to nationality. The tone of the writer's advice,

suggesting more love for the province through dedication to and patriotism for Brazil, was the first public manifestation in the Court of someone from Rio Grande who had a negative view of the revolt.<sup>4</sup> Certainly, the depreciative discourse which painted the Revolution as condemnable, from the list of its motives seen as illusionary to its dismal effects on men and production, inaugurated what it is possible to call pejorative regional identity.

It was surely not the only time, not even in literature, that the Historic and Geographical Institute of the Province of São Pedro proclaimed the need to “enter the pantheon of national glories, according to the convenient image of the defenders of the territory and integrity of Brazil,” not even in the total set of manifestations.” Close observation of the discourses of the provincial presidents shows that their characteristic image was at the same time a motive of esteem and apprehension. Values such as being skilled at fighting, acquired in the many years of war, could be praised in the same communication as part of a conjuncture which allowed the province defend the Empire against threats from neighboring countries, and being the core of an accusation of the inability to establish order and civilization, impelling citizens to commit crimes.<sup>5</sup> Accompanying these digression about the character of Rio-Grandenses, there was always advice against the revolt, reminders of the imperial mercy which had allowed a peaceful return to the patria and, of course, the need to maintain peace. Opinions which counseled forgetfulness and silence about the years when it was not accepted that Rio Grande be governed from the Court.

The political trajectories of some leaders are extremely revealing of the production of these discourses. Domingos José de Almeida, who had been Minister of Finance of Rio-Grande, returned to the city of Pelotas, where he went on to be an important local leader. He returned to his business interests, rejoined the National Guard and to exercise his function as a justice of the peace, though he never returned to the Provincial Assembly. The large mass of documents that composes his personal archive, which is deposited in the Varela Collection of the Historical Archive of Rio Grande do Sul, shows that after the Revolution he continued with the habit of writing letters to his friends. In these we can find few mentions of the Revolution after the initial years. At the end of the 1850s, coinciding with his returning to the press, Almeida began to collect reports about the succession, when the first letters of regret began to emerge. Totally reintegrated into the Empire, the former rebels began to recognize the damage caused by the conflict.

The change in posture was due to several causes. At the end of the 1850s the Empire had met the principal demands of the regional elite, incisively

positioning itself on the Prata River, especially defending the interests of Brazilian livestock producers in the Estado Oriental del Uruguay. The spaces of the imperial bureaucracy had been considerably expanded, providing a greater absorption of individuals in the state apparatus, especially at the local level, creating posts of authority which legitimated prestige and political power. Finally, the passing of years allowed the revolt to be perceived no longer as a threat to individual prestige, demanding that it be hidden or denied, but admitted as part of a political trajectory, as a certificate of experience.

In addition, during this decade the profile of political leaders began to change. Unlike the first legislature of the Provincial Assembly, which was composed of many ranchers (*estancieros*) and soldiers without any formal instruction, a generation of graduates from universities at the center of the country began to gradually assume positions of greater prestige. Despite the firm posture in relation to the interests of cattle producers established in Uruguay, demands multiplied, while spirits in the region became inflamed, resulting in a looming war which would have transformed Rio Grande into the principal theater of operations. The scenario sketched out here, *grosso modo*, allowed the feeling of revolt to recede.

Developments during the 1860s shows that agents from provincial politics were placed in important positions due to the Paraguay War and the consequent prestige, which culminated in the nomination of two ministers from Rio-Grande in 1878 – Gaspar Silveira Martins as Minister of Finance and Manoel Luís Osório as Minister of War. For an entire generation, the weight of suspicion that the memory of succession brought provided the impetus for an approximation with the center of government. Better than picking up weapons was disputing projects within the most privileged decision making space in the entire Empire.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the economic crisis that accompanied the end of the imperial regime propelled the opening of the center of power. Linked to this, the space opened for the migration of many politicians from the Southeast to republican parties allowed peripheral regions to be better represented. This involved the ascension of an old political generation to Court, while a new generation fought for space.

## A NEW DISCOURSE FOR A NEW GENERATION

The first works exclusively dedicated to documenting regional history date from the 1880s and are intimately linked to the republican project. The efforts of Alcides Lima and Joaquim Francisco Assis Brasil, linked to the project of

*Clube 20 de Setembro* – a republican club founded by Rio Grande students from the São Paulo Faculty of Law– resulted in a particular interpretation of the Farroupilha Revolution and its legacy. Both the *História Popular do Rio Grande do Sul* and the *História da República Rio-Grandense* are texts constructed with the intention of meeting scientific assumptions by presenting the history of the social formation of the province. Seeking the foundations of federalism via republicanism, the authors created their version of events, consolidating the image of the homogeneity of the Farroupilhas in regard to the ideas of republicanism and the decentralization of the state.

The possibility of writing about the revolt was opened by the emergence of a new political generation. Detached from the weight those who had participated in the secession carried, and avid to create a discourse that could legitimate their positions, this generation transformed the appropriation of a symbol previously doomed to oblivion in a standard, in a posture as challenging as affirmative. In their process of ‘redeeming’ the unjustly forgotten Farroupilha values, they began the construction of a public memory, molded on the premise of a Rio Grande pioneerism<sup>7</sup> in determined causes, especially abolitionism and republicanism.

The Farrapos came to be seen as examples to be followed, names to be praised and monumentalized. Their actions during the rebellion against the Empire were considered the embryo of the republican cause and no longer as the discourse of regret of two decades previously, the dismal results of contingencies imposed by a logic of war. The protagonism of the province was once again called upon and was no longer explained as nothing other than a simple warrior nature. Starting with a specific reading of positivism, the authors came to consider the particular constitution of the province, its diversity in relation to the others, and the need for this disparity to be understood by all. The discourse was inverted: while before the difference created suspicion on both sides about the success of a province in relation to the Empire, from the 1880s it came to be the main justification for federalism.

The need to maintain the country unified, recognizing the existing regional specificities, constituted the central argument of federalist republicanism. The perception that the union of the different provinces, respected in a real autonomy, would allow the aggrandizement of the nation, its greater unity, and would support a politics that would allow the natural development of each region, was profoundly based on a scientificist concept. As a result, the discourse of these first writings described the revolt covering up any separatist character. The Farroupilhas were loyal to the nation, they had

only demanded changes in the way the relationship between the center and province was formed, including the transformation of the productive and political system.

More than a decade and a half later, though still in this wave of positive republican writings, Alfredo Varela published his work *Rio Grande do Sul: descrição física, histórica e econômica*, in which he did not avoid giving his particular interpretation of the conflict. Writing in 1897, after the proclamation of the Republic, the similarities with the works of Assis Brasil and Alcides Lima are striking. The understanding based on the interaction of *race*, the *environment* and the *moment*, as described by Taine's reading of Comte, created clear determinations about the moral state of the population of Rio Grande do Sul, and constitute naturalizations<sup>8</sup> which persist in the social imagination until the present. Perhaps the great difference of Varela is more instigating for our analysis.

To the contrary of his predecessors, Alfredo Varela identified a potential instrumental policy in the evocation of the revolt. In a context in which the autonomy really achieved within the Republic did not satisfy the Rio Grande elite, Varela drew attention to the fact that succession had been a viable alternative, and the sacrifice of the patria could be a predecessor of a moment of glories. The memory of the Farroupilha Revolution was transformed into a veiled threat, like a warning that the separation from the rest of Brazil could be the solution chosen when federalism was not respected. In part, it returned to a political and discursive resource little used during the Empire, but which was not unknown, since General Antônio de Souza Neto used the same expedient to convince the Crown to intervene in Uruguay, in the initial moments of the Paraguay War.

Part of this process of the transformation of memory into instrumental political heritage, the emergence of the separatist threat in the narrative of the conflict came to be a cultivated memory, more than just an inherited one, in other words, there was a need to expose the private memory, passed from one generation to another within the family, and to transform it into a public good, shared as a narrative that is no longer about the trajectory of individuals, but of an entire region. This was the institution of the notion of the immaterial inheritance or legacy of the Revolution. Varela himself was responsible for the creation of one of the most wide-ranging documentary collections of the period, collected among the descendents of Farroupilhas linked to the *Partido Republicano Rio-Grandense* (PRR). The need to document the facts also became a dispute for access to this memory, in which the republicans had a great



advantage, not only because they opened a new political space attracting family groups who had felt the political isolation of the previous period, but also because of the pioneerism in bringing the question back to the political and intellectual agenda. However, as we shall see this process was not tranquil.

At the turn of the century a considerable number of political biographies and genealogies were published in newspapers and as pamphlets. Produced under order by respectable graduates or by descendents with intellectual credentials, these works sought to highlight people who had honored the history of their families and contained a curious mixture of literary narrative, based on the reports of children and grandchildren of the individual of the individual whose biography was being written and the documental intention. At the same time monuments were built in difficult municipalities, honoring the memory of illustrious citizens, the precursors of various social innovations that were being established at that time.

Both republicans and their adversaries reap to collect the fruits of this process. Monuments and texts can be found praising absolutely contradictory characteristics of the same individual. A very instigating case of this is the production related to the memory of Domingos José de Almeida, the Farroupilha minister of whom we spoke previously. Asked by one of his sons, a graduate wrote a laudatory biography<sup>9</sup> of the spirit dedicated to the common good and to the nation, narrating, among other things, the occasion when his father paid for public festivities in honor of Pedro I and the Brazilian proclamation of independence. The son in question, Junius Brutus Cassius de Almeida, was a declared liberal, and his motivation to recompose the memory of his father, who had died almost three decades earlier, is very clarifying of the dispute being fought at that time.

The republicans were constituted in opposition to the liberals who had absorbed many of the former Farroupilha leaders, including General David Canabarro. However, the Revolution was always a subject for conclaves, backroom conversations, never for a public agenda. The appropriation of the Farroupilha Revolution by the republicans and its public defense altered this context. We can return once to the public memory of Domingos José de Almeida, by way of illustration. In the 1880s Epaminondas Piratinino de Almeida, one of the youngest of Domingos' children – returning from São Paulo having graduated in law and been elected a provincial deputy by the PRR – started the Republican Club in Pelotas. One of the principal actions of the club was the construction of an obelisk dedicated to the memory of Domingos José de Almeida and to his republicanism. The dispute of versions of the

Farroupilha Revolution in this particular case involved two dimensions: the political and the familial.

Epaminondas and Junius Brutus, Almeida's two sons, were in different political groups. Indeed, we can say that they were in different political generations, the former participating in a political culture based on relations acquired during his time at university in São Paulo, while the latter was involved in politics essentially built at the local level, with a recruitment process that privileged other forms, such as family relationships. Another piece of interesting data, just to complete the picture, is that they had been competing with each other for years for power within their own family network, which signified an intricate complex of non-inventoried goods of their parents and almost non-reconcilable relations. What is of particular interest to us is that this case is involved in the dispute over the discourses about the Farroupilha Revolution.

The intention of the principal inscription on the obelisk – The Republicans of Pelotas recommend to Travelers the memory of Domingos de Almeida – was to trace a direct connection between republican ideals and those of the Farroupilhas – and with this to transfer the political legacy of Domingos José de Almeida to the republicans, omitting his dedication to the constitution and the consolidation of the Liberal Party in the province. In this context there is a final aspect to be taken into account at this moment of the discourse about the Farroupilha Revolution, namely the control of and access to documentation about the revolt. The creation of private archives, their preservation and their later transfer to public authority were a form of control and adapting the memory. The legitimate discourse came to be the scientific, the one which had method and was based on what was documented. The discursive dispute was transferred from the arena of daily debates to the means of production of knowledge.

## MAKING THE REVOLUTION GAUCHO, TO 'RIO GRANDIFY' BRAZIL

While the idealized history of the Farroupilha Revolution served at the end of the nineteenth century the political purposes of the new republican generations, providing them with a highly aggregating myth, the same was not valid for the series of images and representations which associated it with the rural pampa world. While the negative sense of the word 'Gaúcho', applied with local protests to every inhabitant of the region, was bad enough, the structural transformations through which the state was passing, on the one

hand, tended to eliminate traditional forms of social relations and old habits and customs, on the other, it moved the epicenter of the state economy to the southern half of the Porto Alegre-immigrant colonies axis, between the coastline and the mountains. Both the modernization of the countryside, with the fencing of land and the introduction of a capitalist logic of production, and the economic ascension of the new area, where the economy was based on the small landholding and the supply of capital through an incipient artisanal industry, caused men of letters to perceive a generalized crisis of Southern agrarian society.

In the initial decades of the new century folklorism and literature showed themselves to be possibilities for registering the world that had been lost. Writers such as Luís Araújo Filho and João Simões Lopes Neto narrated memories of the 'old time,' scenes of life on the pampa or versions of legends and histories which orally circulated in the region. Simões went further, incorporating through the artistic work of language, popular vocabulary and a manner of narrating close to the traditional *causos* sessions of ranch hands in his text, which earned him posthumous notoriety and a place in Brazilian literary manuals after the modernist movement. Alcides Maya, a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, talked about a Pampa golden age, which gave way to the sad reality of poverty and decadence of countryside life. The image of the *tapera*, the abandoned and solitary habitation in Rio Grande, the title of his book of short stories published in 1911, is significant, since it brings readers at the same time to the imagined days of glory of a Gaucho sovereign of vast distances and to the sad condition of ruin, extendable to old Rio Grande. The apparent mourning-celebration *aporía* thus marked a considerable portion of local intellectuals. As a consequence the regionalist theme, already found in romantic nationalist literature, was gradually established as the central aspect of literati attention.

Obviously folklorism was not a new fact in Rio Grande do Sul, nor isolated in the country. The first literary texts about the province drew on material coming from rural culture and featured characters inspired by this culture. Generations of teachers, journalists and politicians collected popular sayings and verses, as well as an extensive vocabulary, material credited to the marginal and suspect figure of the Gaucho frontier. In coastal Brazil the new way of looking at the *sertões*, nevertheless, stimulated the telluric impulse of Rio Grande production by part of the emerging local historiography, as could not be otherwise.

During this period the image of the *patria Gaucho*, which for a long time

had been bothersome to Rio Grande, was reinforced. In the 1920s, it was as if deep currents of thought converged on the emergence of the Gaucho short story, a narrative and thematic genre which dominated the literary preference of the new generation. While the aesthetic modernist project, which implied research, the spurning of conventions, and the valorization and ostentation of artistic material, did not become effective in Rio Grande do Sul, with some exceptions, as shown by Lígia Chiappini Moraes Leite,<sup>10</sup> the ‘green and yellow’ perspective encouraged to a large extent the creation of the heroic Gaucho, a brave warrior who protected Portuguese, and later Brazilian, interest in the Prata region, justifying the efforts of the Gaucho elite to take central power.

And the Farrroupilha Revolution? By now the reader is aware that the remembering of the episode had contributed to the aggrandizement of the Rio Grande do Sul Gaucho, catalyzing a range of ideas – republicanism, federalism, autonomy – already put on the agenda by the local political class in previous conflicts with the center. However, the Gaucho/Revolution equation was hard to manipulate. As has been said, the representations which identified Rio Grande with the rural world also dangerously approximated the Platte culture. As if the possible suspicion of Rio Grande nationality was not enough, the celebration of the heroic Gaucho pointed to a popular tradition, which was uncultivated and something barbaric in the eyes of ‘civilized’ and coastal elites. In other words, this was a problem which historical memory would have to deal with.

In 1920 a group of liberal professionals founded the Historical and Geographical Institute of Rio Grande do Sul (*Instituto Histórico e Geográfico do Rio Grande do Sul* – IHGRGS, later IHGRS), with the mission of congregating the researchers who worked with local themes, with the model being the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute (*Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* – IHGB). Even though it was a private entity, perhaps due to the function of the public assistance received from the state, according to the pioneering work of Marlene Medaglia<sup>11</sup> and Ieda Gutfreind,<sup>12</sup> IHGRS behaved in its first decades of existence as the official owner of the local historical truth. Also in the 1950s the state government used opinions in its commissions to orientate public policy in the area of memory, even generating various disputes between intellectuals with diverging opinions.

As a result of these conflicts, Gutfreind identified the existence of two principal historiographic and ideological matrices which polarized the local public debate about historic subjects: *grosso modo*, the first, called *Platina* – is even applicable to pioneering historiographic productions such as the work of

Varela –, he highlights economic and cultural exchanges between Rio Grande and the Prata and tended to recognize to some extent the separatist nature of the Farroupilha Revolution; the second, born with the IHGRS, *Lusitanian*, marked the connection of the region with the national, painting the heroic Gaucho as the defender of the Portuguese, and later Brazilian, frontier in the south of America, and reinserts the Revolution in a cycle of Regency revolts, affirming its national, patriotic and redeeming character, to the extent that its republican anxieties anticipated the manifest destiny of the country.

However, the agency of the mythical Gaucho, as has been said, not only led intellectuals to a paradox of nationality, but also encountered logical resistance in a production which incorporated the *countryside/barbarity* versus *city/civilization* dichotomy in the wake of the work *Facundo* (1845), by the Argentine Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. In 1925, for example, Moysés Vellinho, under the pseudonym Paulo Arinos, in an altercation on the pages on the *Correio do Povo* newspaper with his historian colleague Rubens de Barcellos about *saudosismo* in the literature of Alcides Maya, would give as a response to the question the need to overcome this ‘prejudice’, which he opposed to the civilization of Gauchismo, denying at the same time the announced defeat of *guasca*: “Conserving his fundamental virtues ... the Gaucho still feels healthy alongside the locomotive, the automobile, the telegraph, the airplane, the *jazz-band*.”<sup>13</sup>

The recent work of Letícia Borges Nedel expands Guttfreind’s reflections by showing that the intellectual disputes did not only occur in function of the definition of the political place of Rio Grande in the construction of Brazil: the divergences involved, amongst other points, the subjects narrated and the heroes celebrated, the types of source used and even the dialogue with the literary discourse. For this author, since the 1920s two ‘registers’ of public memory have been prepared by local intellectuals: first, what we can identify as Guttfreind’s ‘Lusitanian matrix,’ its focus of attention was geopolitics, the history of the “marches and countermarches of Portugal and Spain in Rio Grande de São Pedro,” with its use being principally historiographic; in the second type, analogous to the ‘Platina matrix,’ the privilege was related to the identification of a *folk* subject, “associated with the rural world, the condition of social decline and intimacy with the physical environment,”<sup>14</sup> and its use being eminently literary.

The ‘problem’ caused by the second type of register for official historiography resulted in the the distinction between the Rio Grande de Sul Gaucho and the Platina *Gaucho malo*, who was a ‘wanderer,’ a bandit, and

made up the hosts of Uruguayan and Argentinean *caudilhos*. Having a different origin, Lusitanian, and a history of defending elevated moral and political values, 'our' Gaucho is orderly and a worker. It is interesting to note that, for this focus of analysis, the final solution, as highlighted by Nedel, can only occur after the ennoblement of the term *Gaúcho*, through the extension of this denomination to the military-rancher elite who sponsored the Farroupilha.<sup>15</sup> It is worth highlighting that this process did not imply the en masse adhesion of historians to the *folk* register, since the dispute between memorialist perspectives continued to gain, as we will see later, new animus with the end of the *Estado Novo*. What happened was the ressemantization of the vocabulary, with a long history of suspicions. However, from then on the combined ideological use of the Farroupilha revolt and the *Pampiano* Gaucho seems to us to have been theoretically liberated.

On the eve of the so-called *1930 Revolution*, literary and historiographic regionalism symbolically justified Gaucho political regionalism,<sup>16</sup> forged in the providential alliance of the dissenting local elite to capture central power. The remembrance of the Farroupilha Revolution, in turn, could be found in the crisis discourse characteristic of the intra-oligarchic bargaining which preceded the coup, becoming the inspirational motto and slogan in relation to the impossibility of the pacific re-accommodation of the interests of regional elites: "The Farrapo month is coming with all its ferment/ of rebirth and onslaught," announced the verses of Mansueto Bernardi on a page of *Revista do Globo*<sup>17</sup> in August 1930; "Rio Grande, stand up for Brazil! You cannot fail in your historic destiny" Getúlio Vargas stated in the 4 October manifesto, published in the local press.

Five years later the celebration of the centenary of the Revolution would once again put historic memory at the service of politics. From September 1935 to January 1936, the meadow of Redenção, then baptized as Farroupilha Park, held a commemorative exhibition with the participation of other states from the Federation, such as Santa Catarina, Paraná, Pará, São Paulo, Distrito Federal, Minas and Pernambuco. Of the 17 pavilions five dealt with Rio Grande do Sul. At the moment when the governor of the state, Flores da Cunha, broke with President Getúlio Vargas, as well as the *Frente Única Gaúcha*, the union between the local Liberal and Republican parties which had sustained the 1930 Revolution, which caused conflicts between the central power and the discontented regional elite, the notion of federalism, with its prescription of local autonomy, was resorted to through the Farroupilha memory, now with

the vocation of the political protagonism of the state, with the necessary reaffirmation of its Brazilianness.

As is well known, Vargas' centralism would win the fight. The burning of state flags by the federal government in 1937 would represent the new climate of repression of political particularisms and the denial of cultural specificities. However, a sufficiently elastic myth to adapt to the new contexts of center versus periphery conflict, as we saw constructed based on the history of the Farroupilha Revolution, can only return at the right moment.

### THE 'FESTIVE' RETURN

Between 1947 and 1948 a new element emerged in the Rio Grande scenario: the *traditionalist Gaúcho movement* began to be constructed by a group of students from Júlio de Castilhos College in Porto Alegre, known as Julinho, led by João Carlos D'Ávila Paixão Côrtes and Luís Carlos Barbosa Lessa, amongst others. The regional, a category combated by the Vargas government and by the perspective of 'popular-national' targeted by the intellectuals of the *Estado Novo*,<sup>18</sup> returned then to the public debate in the peripheral stated, being disputed, reconfigured and disseminated by the news means of mass communication, such as radio and cinema.<sup>19</sup> The project of the 'invention of traditions' then put into practice in Rio Grande do Sul by the traditionalist movement operated with *longue durée* social representations, including the literary and historiographic images constructed in the local erudite writing already cited here. Its great efficiency in the 'conquest of souls,' during the 1950s was due both to its use by the Rio Grande press and by the new ritual perspective of Gaúcho civism, anchored on the symbolic apparatus developed for staging in the Center of Gaúcho Traditions (*Centros de Tradições Gaúchas* – CTGs), which included sociability inspired by the idealized hierarchy of the *estância*, divided between *patrão* (boss) and *peões* (hands), the use of folklore for the creation of traditional dances and also the invention of a model of traditionalist women, the *prenda*, whose clothing did not have any historic correspondence with the dress of female Gaúchos of yore.

The founding of civic entities concerned with the 'traditions' of Rio Grande had precedents, such as the Grêmio Gaúcho de Porto Alegre, created by the soldier João Cezimbra Jacques in 1898. Nevertheless, it is known that no institution of this type reached the end of the 1940s with a configuration similar to the CTGs. The scenario described here is a product of that historical context, and its success should be credited to the resonance found in the local

imagination by new commemorative practices. The traditionalist project can only be understood as a function of very favorable circumstances, which delimited its development. The memory of the Farroupilha Revolution, once again underground, was one of the elements of the plot.

According to the consecrated narratives about the emergence of the movement, Paixão Côrtes had approved the removal of the mortal remains of the Farroupilha general David Canabarro to organize on 5 September 1947 a procession of horsemen 'typically' dressed in country clothing, represented by *bombachas*, knee-high boots and spurs, as well as a scarf tied around the neck (which historically were used as a diacritic signal of political preferences or ties of the groups fighting for local power),<sup>20</sup> ponchos and visors. Symbolically, the first activity of the group, which would become its first regular specific rite, synthesizing the two figures privileged in regionalist, literary and historiographic discourse: the *soldier-rancher*, conqueror and defender of territory, due to the Farroupilha episode the mainstay of liberty and the republic, made a 'Gaúcho' by the work of historical memory, as we have seen, and the *campesino* (peasant), the small fry of the troops of generals, but, and principally, the inhabitant of the open spaces, the ranch hand and the small farmer, constructor of Rio Grande, the basis of the economy and the 'origin' of regional culture. At this moment what was at play was not only the ressignification of the vocabulary, a necessary step for what would come, but the deliberate confusion between both registers of memory which returned to public debate. Everything occurred as if the acclaimed Southern social democracy, another of the myths created by traditional historiography, was materialized in that context in which young 'ranch hands' were raised to the category of official guardians of Farroupilha memory.

The two most visible and ostensibly publicized marks in the procession of the remains of David Canabarro were the peasant clothing and the state flag, the former flag of the Piratini Republic. The formalization of Gaúcho traditions began at this moment. The clothing used passed through a selection process in which the 'inventoried' elements configured an aesthetic which surpassed the definition of the clothing code: showing contemporaries 'everything which the Gaúcho used' was the option that best denoted the ethical and political commitment of the group to prove the existence of *Gaudério* and 'save it' from forgetfulness. Old utensils used in the countryside were thus incorporated into typical outfits in artistic or rituals performances that were not at all related to cattle or horses. In the same manner light arms such as knives and daggers, or old revolvers, such as the *garrucha*, came to be part of in the same conditions



the regional symbology corporified in clothing. ‘Military qualities’ were also manifested in the traditionalist attire, as well as civic celebration represented by the cavalcade in honor of the memory of one of the principal leaders of the Farrapa sedition.

The core of traditional imagination manipulated by the group of young people also appeared in the ‘rescue’ of the Farroupilha standard, which had been prohibited under the *Estado Novo*. Ten years after the ceremony of the burning of the state flags, but when was no longer a crime to carry the banner of Rio Grande. Even so, the narratives of the founders of the movement noticed the difficulty to find the banner in the public spaces of the capital, a fact that would have repercussions in the reaction of the crowd who accompanied the group.<sup>21</sup> Since those peasant instruments were considered emblems of ‘Gaúcho identity’, this thus involved giving greater visibility to the standard. Furthermore, the young students appropriated a symbol developed within the political movement of which they considered themselves cultural heirs.

After the Gaúcho cavalcade in the commemorations of Patria Week, which received encouragement and logistical support from the *Liga da Defesa Nacional* (National Defense League),<sup>22</sup> the group decided to carry out new activities in allusion to 20 September. Two days after the parade on 7 September, once again *pilchados* (wearing traditional Gaúcho clothing) and mounted, the young men took a flame from the *Pira da Pátria* (the patriotic fire) just before it was extinguished, and brought it to a guarded ‘lamp’ in a small improvised cabin in the school yard, which represented the *galpão* of the Gaúcho *estâncias*, the dormitory of the *peões*, shelter of travelers and stage for the narrations of the traditional *causos*. This began the so-called *Ronda Gaúcha*, which involved artistic and peasant *campeiras* activities and intellectual debates about the literature and history of Rio Grande do Sul. It was repeated in the following years, now called *Ronda Crioula*, and in 1964 would be officially incorporated in the calendar of important state dates as Farroupilha Week.<sup>23</sup>

It is worth mentioning that the dispute between the two registers of memory was also manifested in the definition of the structure of CTG 35, the first traditionalist entity, and the mold for the centers that would irradiate around Rio Grande, founded in 1948 to house the group of Juliano students, plus the soldiers from the state brigade, which had a parallel civic project. The first perspective gave primacy to the popular Gaúcho, predicting the opening of society to all *Rio-Grandenses*, from the countryside and from the city, with and without real connections with the rural world. The second involved the foundation of a closed institution, with Masonic inspiration, with 35 effective

and lifelong members in honor of the year of the outbreak of the Farroupilha Revolution, thence the name it adopted, and celebrated the Lusitania military and rancher elite dominant in the official historical memory. Once more the solution found was the conciliation of both elements, as well as the acceptance of any interested persons, through a *campeira* or intellectual – dissertations about local culture – test evaluated by peers, called the ‘condition of adjustment.’

Nevertheless, there was initially a certain preponderance of the folk perspective both in the configuration of the center (the *galpão* model), and in the gradual definition of the traditionalist doctrine, very probably due to personal projects, such as those of Paixão Côrtes and Barbosa Lessa, who in 1950 joined the State Folklore Commission, the local branch of the National Folklore Commission (*Comissão Nacional de Folclore* – CNFL), through which they carried out field research on Gaucho dances. Barbosa Lessa would become the great publicizer of the movement, through his insertion in the media and acceptance by local scholars, as well as positive criticism of his literary project in the center of the country, have received the national novel prize in 1959, awarded by the Brazilian Academy of Letters for *Os Guaxos*. As a writer he followed the path of Simões Lopes Neto, but showed himself to be very sensitive to the questions of his time, such as the difficult assimilation of the indigenous-missionary tradition in local memory, denouncing of the conditions of blacks on *estância* and the incorporation of women as protagonists in Gauchesque literature, as shown by Joana Bosak.<sup>24</sup>

Decades later, between 1980 and 1983, his period as the State Secretary of Culture, Sport and Tourism (SCDT) would consolidate official support for the regional identity based on the traditionalist binomial *Gaucho/Farroupilha*. While it is true that his trajectory as a folklorist would lead him to devote attention to the diversity of local cultural manifestations, pursuing the representation (and pacification) of the wide variety of Rio Grande society, the mobilization of the state apparatus for the commemoration of the Revolution, during the Farroupilha Weeks carried out under his mandate, as well as public policies that encouraged popular Gauchesque, would contribute to the definitive emergence of the episode as a dominant identity myth, widely accepted by the regional imagination.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

During this article we have sought to present a panoramic vision of the phenomenon in question, namely the long process of the construction,

updating and disputing of the myth of the Farroupilha Revolution. To carry out this task, we have made strategic 'stops' at capital moments, observing the discourse of the combatants, the memory cultivated by relatives and political heirs, regionalist literature, traditional historiography and one of the principal rituals of organized Gaucho traditionalism, extended to all of Rio Grande society for the expropriation of the state. As we can perceive the celebration of the episode was slow to emerge as a civic possibility in the regional scenario; beforehand it was necessary to forget it, condemn it, resignify it, in a tortuous and broken line which accompanies the historic emergence of Rio Grande, its social transformation, the rise of new generations of politicians and intellectuals, the professional organization of memory, the new conflicts for power and of course the often tense relationship with the center of the country.

In recent years the contesting of the myth, by various subjects and from the most diverse political and social perspectives, has become trivial. For example, in the 1980s a profound financial crisis of the state was touted by the local rulers, despite the positive economic figures. At that moment the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Revolution reminded the Gauchos of the countryside and the city of the 'historic debt' with the rest of Brazil, due to the high price paid for its 'optional' adhesion to the nation. The discourse which credited the perceived crisis to the inefficiency of the Union had immediate effects, such as the intervention of the Central Bank to save Banco Sul Brasileiro from bankruptcy. Several years later a funny episode called the attention of the country to the 'particularities' of the 'brother of the South': resorting to symbols created by the Farrapa elite, Irton Marx, now a councilor in the municipality of Santa Cruz do Sul, preached the creation of a Pampa Republic in an interview on one of the most popular Sunday night television programs, revealing the most triumphalist side of Gauchism. However, as proof of the malleability of the myth, we can cite the election of Olívio Dutra from the PT as state governor in 1998, when the image of the candidate synthesized the figure of the heroic Gaucho, this time undeniably on the left, by the use of the red scarf around the neck, regional language, a strong accent, a suggestive moustache and the epithet of *galo missioneiro* (literally 'missionary cock') In 2010 the candidacy of the victorious Tarso Genro, also from the PT, still resorted to Gaucho identity and the Farroupilha memory in his electoral propaganda.

As highlighted by the anthropologist Ruben Oliven, this identity was based on nonsense: at the same time that it demanded a differentiated position appealing to the cultural singularities of the Rio Grande, it necessarily passes

through the affirmation of the Brazilianness of its inhabitants.<sup>25</sup> It is a complex game in which the specific is limited by the general, and cannot, except in extreme cases surpass it. It was this exact point that the Farroupilha Revolution is found, allied to the myth of the Pampiano Gaúcho. The social ballast which the theme possesses is measureable by the almost obligatory appropriation that any group has to achieve to construct a general agenda of demands for Rio Grande do Sul or by disputing the directions of the internal political scenario, reproducing the sensation of unanimity about regional identity. However, as we have seen, its trajectory is something else. What everything indicates is that the great success of the myth is precisely due to the history of the dispute, which provides the actors of today with a variable blade of identity resources, a repertoire of symbols which at the same time is cohesive and multiple.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> AZEVEDO, Gustavo. Cara a cara com o gaúcho. *Zero Hora*, Porto Alegre, 3 out. 2010, p.26-27.

<sup>2</sup> PESAVENTO, Sandra. *República Velha Gaúcha: frigoríficos, charqueadas, criadores*. Porto Alegre: Movimento; IEL, 1980; GUTFREIND, Ieda. *A historiografia Rio-Grandense*. Porto Alegre: Ed. UFRGS, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> PINTO, Celi Regina Jardim. O discurso da crise: uma presença constante na história gaúcha. In: SCHULER, Donaldo (Org.). *Mito ontem e hoje*. Porto Alegre: Ed. UFRGS, 1990. p.12-28.

<sup>4</sup> GOMES, Carla Renata Antunes de Souza. *De Rio-Grandense a Gaúcho: o triunfo do avesso. Um processo de representação regional na literatura do século XIX (1847-1877)*. Porto Alegre: Editoras Associadas, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> AHRs: Documentação dos Governantes A-7.002.

<sup>6</sup> VARGAS, Jonas Moreira. *Entre a paróquia e a Corte: os mediadores e as estratégias familiares da elite política do Rio Grande do Sul (1850-1889)*. Santa Maria (RS): Ed. UFSM, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Assis Brasil and Alcides Lima use the expression 'originality' to deal with the pioneering role that is assumed to be a fundamental characteristic of the province.

<sup>8</sup> ALMEIDA, Marlene Medaglia. *Na trilha de um andarengo: Alcides Maya (1877-1944)*. Porto Alegre: Ed. PUCRS/IEL, 1994.

<sup>9</sup> CUNHA, José Zeferino da. *Apontamentos para a história da revolução de 1835*. Biografia de Domingos José de Almeida. Pelotas: Tipografia da Livraria Americana, 1902.

<sup>10</sup> LEITE, Ligia Chiappini de Moraes. *Regionalismo e modernismo*. São Paulo: Ática, 1978.

<sup>11</sup> MEDAGLIA, Marlene. *Introdução ao estudo da historiografia sul-rio-grandense: inovações e recorrências do discurso oficial (1920-1935)*. Thesis (Masters in Sociology) – Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Antropologia, Ciência Política e Sociologia, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul. Porto Alegre, 1983.

<sup>12</sup> GUTFREIND, Ieda. *A historiografia Rio-Grandense*. Porto Alegre: Ed. UFRGS, 1992.

<sup>13</sup> ARINOS, Paulo. Guerra à saudade! In: CHAVES, Flávio Loureiro. *O ensaio literário no Rio Grande do Sul (1868-1960)*. São Paulo: Livros Técnicos e Científicos; Brasília: INL, 1979. p.101.

<sup>14</sup> NEDEL, Letícia Borges. Regionalismo, historiografia e memória: Sepé Tiaraju em dois tempos. *Anos 90*, Porto Alegre, v.11, n.19/20, jan.-dez. 2004. p.358.

<sup>15</sup> NEDEL, Letícia Borges. Um passado novo para uma história em crise: regionalismo e folcloristas no Rio Grande do Sul. Dissertation (Doctorate in History) – Instituto de Ciências Humanas, Programa de Pós-Graduação em História, Universidade de Brasília. Brasília, 2005. p.68.

<sup>16</sup> In a study that is already a classic, Joseph Love defines this type of regionalism as “political behavior that accepts the existence of a wider nation state, but which seeks the economic favoritism and political patronage of the greater political unit, even at the risk of compromising the political system itself.” LOVE, Joseph. *O regionalismo gaúcho e as origens da Revolução de 1930*. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1975. p.115.

<sup>17</sup> BERNARDI, Mansueto. Primavera Farrapa. *Revista do Globo*, Porto Alegre, 30 ago. 1930, s.p.

<sup>18</sup> VELLOSO, Monica Pimenta. Os intelectuais e a política cultural no Estado Novo. In: OLIVEIRA, Lúcia Lippi de. Sinais de modernidade na Era Vargas: vida literária, cinema e rádio. In: FERREIRA, Jorge; DELGADO, Lucilia de Almeida (Org.). *O Brasil Republicano: o tempo do nacional-estatismo: do início da década de 1930 ao apogeu do Estado Novo*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2003.

<sup>19</sup> OLIVEIRA, Lúcia Lippi de. Sinais de modernidade na Era Vargas: vida literária, cinema e rádio. In: FERREIRA; DELGADO (Org.), 2003.

<sup>20</sup> During the 1893 Federalist Revolution, for example, the supporters of the Republican Party (*Picapaus*) were identified by a white scarf, while those of their federalists opponents (*Maragatos*) used a red one.

<sup>21</sup> According to Paixão Côrtes the exhibition of the standard created great popular commotion: “I saw the public’s emotions, enthusiastically applauding, respectfully uncovering their heads, effusively shouting ‘Viva Rio Grande’, ‘Viva Rio Grande’ and handkerchiefs raised to eyes to dry tears...” PAIXÃO CÔRTEZ, João Carlos. *Origem da Semana Farroupilha: primórdios do Movimento Tradicionalista*. Porto Alegre: Evangraf, 1994. p.68.

<sup>22</sup> LDN was founded in Rio de Janeiro in 1916 by intellectuals, politicians and soldiers led by Olavo Bilac, as a civic and patriotic society for the defense and promotion of nationalist

ideas. After 1938 the Rio Grande do Sul directorate began to organize the *Corrida do Fogo Simbólico da Pátria*, aiming to pay annual tribute to the memory of the historic characters considered the 'great figures of the nation.' Leaving from different points each year, the *Corrida* ended at Farroupilha Park in Porto Alegre, where the 'pira-monument' was located which guarded the 'symbolic fire' until it was extinguished on 7 September.

<sup>23</sup> Law 4.850, signed on 11 December 1964 by Deputy Francisco Solano Borges, then president of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, made the Farroupilha Week official, which "was to be commemorated 14-20 September of each year, in honor of the Farroupilha heroes," as defined in its first article.

<sup>24</sup> BOSAK, Joana. *De guaxos e de sombras: um ensaio sobre a identidade do gaúcho*. Porto Alegre: Dublinense, 2010.

<sup>25</sup> OLIVEN, Ruben George. *A parte e o todo: a diversidade cultural no Brasil-Nação*. Petrópolis (RJ): Vozes, 1992.